

SERVICE REVIEW

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4. SERVICE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The term service review generally refers to the full range of services that a public agency provides, or is authorized to provide. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) concluded that LAFCO is only required to review services provided by agencies with spheres of influence. In addition, OPR determined that LAFCO's have complete flexibility in identifying which services will be reviewed, the timetable for review, and what geographic areas will be selected for review. The statewide requirement for service reviews is a response to the identified need for a more coordinated and efficient public service structure to support California's anticipated growth. The service review provides LAFCO with a tool to comprehensively study existing and future public service conditions and to evaluate organizational options for accommodating growth, presenting urban sprawl, and ensuring that critical services are efficiently provided.

Service Review Determinations

In preparing a service review, LAFCOs are required to make a written statement of determination with respect to each of the following:

- a. Infrastructure needs and deficiencies
- b. Growth and population projections
- c. Financing constraints and opportunities
- d. Cost avoidance opportunities
- e. Opportunities for rate restructuring
- f. Opportunities for shared facilities
- g. Government structure options, including advantages and disadvantages of consolidation or reorganization of service providers.
- h. Evaluation of management efficiencies
- i. Local accountability and governance

LAFCO must make determinations regarding the provision of public services per the provision of Government Code § 56430. The service review process does not require LAFCO to initiate changes to organizations based on the determination; however, LAFCO, local agencies, and the public may subsequently use the determinations as an informational tool to consider changes to services, local jurisdictions, or spheres of influence. It is worth noting that local agencies are not the object of the service review; rather, service reviews are intended to survey the *adequacy of public services* within specific regions. Nevertheless, because public agencies are the mechanism for providing services, the review of individual agencies is unavoidable.

4.a Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

In authorizing the preparation of municipal service reviews, the State Legislature has focused on one of LAFCO's core missions—encouraging efficient provision of public services. Infrastructure needs and deficiencies refer to the ability of planned, as well as existing, public facilities to provide adequate public services. Infrastructure can be evaluated in terms of capacity, condition, availability, and quality plus correlations with operational, capital improvement, and finance plans. It is recognized that budget constraints may create unmet infrastructure needs; however, identification of deficiencies may promote wider understanding and support for needed improvements.

Within much of the rural unincorporated and unfunded fire protection areas, public infrastructure is generally inadequate to facilitate effective structural fire protection, emergency medical, and rescue services.

An indicator that regional infrastructure is adequate to meet regional fire protection, emergency medical, and rescue demand is the ability of the system to respond to every emergency within acceptable time parameters. Industry research presents convincing evidence that response to structural fires must occur within eight minutes in order to contain fires to the room of origin. The American Heart Association advises that brain damage in non-breathing victims can be avoided only if victims are resuscitated within four to six minutes. Within the unincorporated region, funding, topography, lack of public roads and highways, a prevalence of private roads that do not connect or permit through access, plus large intervals between fire protection and emergency medical facilities, prevent personnel from responding within industry standards for protecting life and property to much of the rural unincorporated or unfunded fire protection area.

There is currently no long-term comprehensive strategy within the unincorporated region to improve or add to infrastructure for fire protection, emergency medical, and rescue services.

Despite a regional fire protection and emergency medical services system that is stressed because of inadequate public road access and insufficient public safety facilities, the lack of adequate on-going funding sources (ad-valorem taxes, special taxes, development fees) prohibits the development of a cohesive strategy for a regional remedy. The tax rates for many of the FPD's and CSA's were established pre-Proposition 13, when many of the communities were very rural and the demand for services were minimal. Over the last 25-30 years many of the communities and transportation corridors have drastically grown and the demand for services has seen corresponding growth. However, due to restrictions placed on local government by various propositions, the funding

options to enhance for fire services infrastructure are very limited, and, therefore, have not kept pace with the demand for services as the communities have transitioned from rural, to suburban, and in some cases, urban clusters.

Planning for structural fire protection, emergency medical and rescue infrastructure has historically been the responsibility of multiple independent fire districts, the County of San Bernardino on behalf of Board Governed Fire Districts and County Service Areas (CSA), with input from voluntary advisory boards, and the County exercising its land-use authority. Typically, each of these agencies performs planning and funding activities in isolation without regard to possibilities of duplicating or under-utilizing existing regional resources. There is no formal collaborative program or cooperative organization to oversee planning or funding of replacement, upgraded, or additional infrastructure components. Informal collaborative efforts do exist between fire agencies to discuss and review proposed new facilities and resources. However, few special districts have formal replacement (depreciation) schedules or strategic plans for adding facilities; fewer still are able to maintain committed reserve funds or funded liability programs that could support planning efforts, although several of the FPD in more urbanized areas have been successful in adopting funded liability programs to ensure resources will be available when new facilities are needed.

Decisions concerning apparatus replacement are generally budget driven depending on annual funding levels that do not allow long-term planning. Even the better-funded districts have, until recent years, tended to make apparatus appraisal and replacement decisions an annual, rather than long-term, process.

The region relies upon a complex system of automatic and mutual aid among federal, state, and local agencies, volunteer organizations, and tribal governments in order to provide fire protection and emergency medical services.

Fire protection and emergency medical agencies assess risk against available resources and formulate plans for providing services. Individual agencies rarely possess sufficient resources to cover extraordinary situations; moreover, unnecessary duplications of effort and needless expense would result if each fire protection agency independently acquired facilities, apparatus, equipment, and personnel to create a response capability able to confront every conceivable worst-case scenario. Accordingly, a basic component of fire protection strategy is to share apparatus and personnel among agencies as requested (mutual aid) or dispatch resources automatically upon notification of an incident (automatic aid).

This concept is echoed throughout disaster planning, and has been incorporated into a strategic State Mutual Aid Plan developed under the California Emergency Services Act (Government Code § 8550 et seq.). Under the State Plan, the State, its counties, and signatory cities and fire protection districts participate in a State Mutual Aid Agreement that originated from the belief that, "No community has

resources sufficient to cope with any and all emergencies for which potential exists.” The State is divided into regions for the purpose of mutual aid; San Bernardino, San Diego, Imperial, Riverside, Inyo, and Mono Counties are grouped together as Region VI. In San Bernardino County, each city and unincorporated area fire protection agency is signatory to the State Mutual Aid Agreement.

Additionally, the County, each city, and each special district has adopted a local emergency plan fundamentally identical to the State Emergency Plan to facilitate cohesive operations among all mutual aid participants. State Law designates the County of San Bernardino as an *operational area* for disaster response. The County operational area, in turn, is organized into ten zones (six geographic and four agency zones) with assigned zone coordinators who report to an area fire and rescue coordinator. Mutual emergency responses are initially generated from within zones; advanced to other operational area zones as required; and, if necessary, elevated to the Operational and Region VI level where the Regional Coordinator has authority to request response from other State OES regions.

Fire protection agencies also participate in individual automatic aid agreements with surrounding agencies. Automatic aid is designed to furnish responses within the normal operating range of participating agencies; no added support—as would be provided by mutual aid—is required. Research is incomplete; however, preliminary and anecdotal evidence seem to indicate that automatic aid within much of the unincorporated area flows primarily in one direction—from well-funded agencies to the lesser funded. In other words, agencies with minimal resources are the largest recipients of mutual aid and automatic aid. This system is a logical remedy for providing effective safety service to areas with minimal resources; however, it relies on the willingness of agencies with relatively more resources to subsidize less affluent agencies.

The parcels of land within the more developed unincorporated areas of the County are either within a self or board governed fire protection district or a CSA. However, a large portion of the unincorporated area of the county (North/East Desert Region) is not within an establish FPD or CSA, but has historical been served by CSA 38. In many cases, however, the funding is inadequate to support the necessary services and infrastructure, and an unstable reliance on neighboring departments provides fire protection, emergency medical, and rescue services to these areas.

There are several thousand unincorporated parcels located outside of established fire protection districts and CSA's. Many of these parcels are developed with some type of structure, are prone to brush or grass fires, or are recreational areas that may require the services of a fire protection and emergency medical services agency. Generally, unprotected areas are surrounded by a FPD's or CSA's that are sustained by property tax and in some cases benefit fee revenues. Service to these unprotected areas is provided

primarily by CSA38 and assisting agencies on a mutual aid basis, which in turn take action on a case-by-case basis after considering their resources and assessing the risk of **not** responding. The cost of providing emergency services to unprotected areas are often times subsidized by the taxpayers within the responding public agency and the County's general fund.

The emergency service response of Paid-Call fire protection organizations is unpredictable.

Paid-Call Firefighters originally organized to provide fire protection and emergency medical services in several unincorporated communities that are not within fire protection districts. Adequate sources of public funds, either property tax or other revenues, are not generally available to the paid-call stations, although some professional services contracts do exist – CSA 20 (Joshua Tree) contracts with CSA 38 (County Fire) for a fixed amount for fire protection each year. Additionally, the County does allocate discretionary funds to the paid-call fire stations that serve the unfunded fire protection areas, plus there is an aggressive program to acquire grants funds for these stations.

Additionally, the availability of viable firefighter candidates, who must meet minimum medical and physical standards, are difficult to find due to the age groups available in many areas and the changing societal values as it relates to “volunteering” and taking on a second full-time career. This decline in Paid-Call or Volunteers is of national concern and one that is affecting the fire service even in communities that have had “volunteer” fire departments for over a hundred years. Recently, some members of paid-call stations are not available due to the continuing war on terrorism, as they have been deployed with the various armed services.

4.b Growth and Population Projections

Efficient provision of public services is linked to an agency's ability to plan for future need. For example, an emergency service provider must be prepared to supply services within existing **and** future levels of demand and must also be able to determine **where** future demand will occur. The service review evaluates whether projections for future growth and population patterns are integrated into the planning function.

The San Bernardino Association of Government (SANBAG) projections to 2030 indicate that the unincorporated region will undergo significant growth.

Because projected growth patterns should influence the location and sizing of future public facilities, it is essential that population and development forecasts be integrated into the region's planning process. SANBAG forecasts indicate that between now and 2030, the service area population will grow by approximately **56.4** percent—adding another 339,256 residents that may need emergency services. Both housing and employment show similar growth within the service area. Housing will increase an estimated **73.2** percent, growing from an estimated 175,895 dwelling units to 304,666 dwelling units. Employment figures show an increase from an estimated 112,802 to 250,983 a **122.4%** growth. However, recent indicators in some areas (i.e. Yucca Valley FPD, Central Valley FPD, City of Needles, etc.) show that the growth indicators may be too conservative. The Town of Yucca Valley is currently considering a large (1,654 unit) housing project which, when completed in 2007, will exceed the projected SANBAG estimate for 2030 both in terms of dwelling units and population. Growth will be unevenly distributed throughout the region and each fire protection district, Community Service Area, and contract cities will experience different impacts on existing facilities, planning, capital needs, and staffing.

Population Growth for San Bernardino County

	2000 Population	2005 Population	2010 Population	2015 Population	2020 Population	2025 Population	2030 Population
Adelanto*	18,167	21,888	25,939	30,675	35,351	39,832	44,129
Apple Valley	54,585	63,453	70,873	77,333	83,707	89,815	95,675
Barstow	21,133	23,902	25,401	28,831	32,215	35,460	38,571
Big Bear Lake	5,478	6,090	6,443	6,851	7,256	7,642	8,013
Chino	67,299	75,097	82,319	90,563	98,703	106,500	113,977
Chino Hills	67,312	75,017	78,307	80,126	81,916	83,636	85,284
Colton	47,780	54,733	62,086	68,087	74,004	79,676	85,117
Fontana	130,188	158,590	179,426	195,373	211,105	226,186	240,650
Grand Terrace	11,646	12,409	12,928	13,375	13,817	14,239	14,646
Hesperia*	62,835	78,494	95,800	117,568	139,049	159,638	179,383
Highland	44,668	48,458	50,167	54,624	59,020	63,229	67,267

Service Review

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
	Population	Population	Population	Population	Population	Population	Population
Montclair	33,144	34,459	34,709	34,808	34,904	34,997	35,087
Needles*	4,841	5,225	5,225	5,225	5,225	5,225	5,225
Ontario	158,331	171,154	180,059	212,734	244,977	275,873	305,509
R Cucamonga	128,793	149,527	154,170	159,832	165,417	170,771	175,904
Redlands	63,875	69,288	72,036	76,415	80,737	84,875	88,842
Rialto	92,171	97,848	99,936	102,851	105,727	108,486	111,128
S Bernardino	185,772	199,035	207,021	208,860	210,672	212,404	214,069
Twntyne Palms	27,590	28,879	32,280	34,502	36,693	38,796	40,810
Unincorporated	282,120	307,497	329,293	357,214	384,773	411,188	436,515
Upland	68,643	74,991	80,143	82,563	84,949	87,239	89,433
Victorville	64,871	75,952	81,592	92,548	103,353	113,711	123,641
Yucaipa	41,394	47,042	49,689	53,361	56,984	60,456	63,786
Yucca Valley	16,839	18,339	18,946	19,523	20,088	20,630	21,150
		1,919,215	2,059,420	2,229,700	2,397,709	2,558,729	2,713,149

Source: San Bernardino Association of Governments (SANBAG)

*Denotes a contract city under San Bernardino County Fire Management

To further illustrate the growth facing San Bernardino County, SANBAG has estimated that the number of dwelling units will rise dramatically responding to housing needs combined with affordable real estate. The following chart shows the projected growth through 2030.

Dwelling Unit Growth for San Bernardino County

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
	Households	Households	Households	Households	Households	Households	Households
Adelanto*	4,713	5,383	6,545	8,109	9,702	11,280	12,858
Apple Valley	18,636	20,726	24,022	27,199	30,457	33,697	36,958
Barstow	7,645	8,246	9,072	10,414	11,790	13,155	14,527
Big Bear Lake	2,355	2,509	2,675	2,886	3,105	3,324	3,546
Chino	17,331	18,617	20,818	23,589	26,451	29,306	32,202
Chino Hills	20,158	21,511	22,466	23,589	24,779	25,989	27,252
Colton	14,530	15,783	18,429	20,777	23,205	25,630	28,088
Fontana	34,282	39,400	45,291	50,391	55,669	60,955	66,323
Grand Terrace	4,221	4,327	4,550	4,800	5,065	5,334	5,613
Hesperia*	20,014	23,033	28,575	35,239	42,038	48,775	55,513
Highland	13,472	14,187	15,111	16,796	18,541	20,289	22,067
Loma Linda	7,596	8,393	9,714	10,526	11,373	12,225	13,098
Montclair	8,810	8,882	9,035	9,264	9,518	9,783	10,070
Needles*	1,942	2,027	2,027	2,027	2,027	2,027	2,027
Ontario	43,538	45,374	48,749	58,981	69,473	79,909	90,417
R Cucamonga	41,123	46,430	48,972	52,371	55,932	59,522	63,222
Redlands	23,661	24,857	26,419	29,091	31,865	34,642	37,477
Rialto	24,693	25,313	26,059	27,659	29,339	31,042	32,805
S Bernardino	56,341	57,221	58,288	60,211	62,290	64,440	66,734
Twntyne Palms	7,669	7,696	8,799	9,554	10,333	11,112	11,902
Unincorporated	90,035	94,425	104,352	116,091	128,197	140,270	152,477
Upland	24,596	25,955	28,713	30,553	32,486	34,437	36,457
Victorville	20,978	22,986	24,762	28,621	32,567	36,490	40,427
Yucaipa	15,236	16,591	17,659	19,638	21,686	23,738	25,824
Yucca Valley	6,923	7,300	7,680	8,208	8,752	9,298	9,855
	530,498	567,172	618,782	686,584	756,640	826,669	897,739

Source: San Bernardino Association of Governments (SANBAG)

*Denotes a contract city under San Bernardino County Fire Management

Planning for future fire protection, emergency medical, and rescue services in the service area is limited by the legal and financial constraints of the current organizational structure of County Fire.

There is no mechanism for individual fire districts and CSA's to reach out and assist struggling areas with simple assistance. The mutual aid and incident command systems does coordinate emergency responses among the districts and CSA's; nevertheless, there is no centralized ability to coordinate planning activities for improving future emergency services and maximize efficiencies within the service areas. This consolidation effort will provide the necessary mechanism to allow future planning on a regional basis. Appendix A – Fire Service Goals, and Appendix B – Service Levels and Deployment Goals indicate both County Fires commitment to future planning and recognition of the need for such planning.

4.c Financing Constraints and Opportunities

A community's public service needs should be reviewed in light of resources available to fund services. The service review examines the financing constraints and opportunities that have an impact on the delivery of services within the County. This provides LAFCO, local agencies, and the public the ability to assess whether agencies are taking advantage of available funding and financing opportunities. Service reviews *may* also discover potential innovations, including collaborative strategies, with financing mechanisms, which may hold value for affected local agencies.

The following points represent the service review determinations relating to financing constraints and opportunities:

Constraints

- With continuing public fiscal constraints and limited funding options, the local fire agencies' advalorem property tax revenues will not be adequate to continue funding the current service levels especially in the suburban and rural areas, and, specifically in areas that are experiencing predominantly residential growth.
Note: FPD's that are currently in high growth areas (commercial and residential – valley communities) or experiencing an on-going real estate resale market (mountain communities) are currently enjoying a significant growth in advalorem taxes. However, as either the economy declines or the growth moves to other areas of the county, the challenge will be to sustain the operational cost associated with the increased staffing of additional fire stations serving these areas.
- The local agencies' abilities to generate revenue through alternative sources such as special taxes or assessments, continues to be impacted by the need for two-thirds voter approval.
- The absence of capital development fees further constrains the fire agencies that serve the unincorporated areas to plan, build, and construct fire stations and other infrastructure to serve these areas of increased demands.
- Costs are likely to escalate for all fire agencies throughout San Bernardino County, regardless of city or district design, due to rises in salary, wage, and benefit changes. Additionally, the cost of operation is expected to rise due to increasing energy cost, vehicle costs (fuel, tires, etc.), communications, and normal business expenses associated with the day-to-day course of work.

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- Existing budgetary reserves for some agencies may be insufficient to meet future needs.

Opportunities

- The expansion of the Yucca Valley Sphere of Influence and the reorganization of the County Fire Department into a single countywide FPD is intended to further maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and to reduce the inefficiencies and associated costs of managing the 32 separate districts. The creation of separate regional improvement districts is designed to reflect and correlate revenues to expenditures, and gives these regions an opportunity to address service levels, and funding options to maintain or enhance services. The countywide FPD also give citizens and the Board of Supervisors the opportunity to evaluate countywide funding options.
- The creation of a single countywide district will reduce the impact of loss of property taxes resulting from annexations by spreading this loss over a larger base of tax revenues, versus the current impacts that a small fire district or CSA experiences.
- The proposed countywide FPD, by being a single entity, is anticipated to be better positioned to provide contract services to other agencies and improve the regional delivery of cost effective fire services. These services could include fire, rescue, paramedic, ambulance, vehicle maintenance, communications, training, fire prevention, hazardous materials response and specialized services such as, confined space rescue, over the side rescue, urban search and rescue, fire dozers, arson investigation, incident management, peer support/critical incident stress management.

4.d Cost Avoidance Opportunities

Efficient service delivery depends, in part, on eliminating unnecessary costs. Cost avoidance opportunities are explored in this study including, but not limited to identifying and exploring such actions as reducing or eliminating duplicative services, reducing high administration to operation cost ratios, replacing outdated or deteriorating infrastructure and equipment, redrawing overlapping or inefficient service boundaries, replacing inefficient purchasing or budgeting practices, implementing economies of scale, efficiently utilizing outsourcing opportunities.

The following points represent the service review determinations relating to cost avoidance opportunities:

- The reorganization of the current structure of San Bernardino County Fire Department will provide sufficient economies of scale to facilitate service improvements throughout the county. It will provide sufficient economies of scale to continue our County Hazardous Materials response team, fire and arson investigation response, and special rescue operations. Our combined support service resources such as vehicle services, warehouse and logistical support, training and communications provide these resources at a lower unit cost than on individual district basis.
- The proposed reorganization could result in a reduction in the total investment required of the individual districts and services areas for both operational and capital costs.
- The proposed reorganization will eliminate the need for the preparation, organization, and management of the current thirty-two separate district budgets and five ambulance enterprise accounts. The reorganization will result in a work effort reduction to five budgets (e.g. Consolidated Fire, four Improvement Districts, etc.).

4.e Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

Although not applicable in all cases, a service review may review agency rates, which are charged for public services, examining opportunities for rate restructuring where possible without impairing the quality of services provided. Agency rates can be reviewed for rate setting methodologies, conditions that could affect future rates, and variances among rates, fees, taxes, charges, etc. within an agency. The following points represent the service review determinations relating to opportunities for rate restructuring: The costs of service provision may be reduced and certain efficiencies increased using strategies for sharing resources and the procurement of those resources. Service review considers the development of options for planning for future sharing of facilities and/or resources.

- All Board-governed fire districts have implemented the approved fees for ambulance rates, inspections, and permits. There are no opportunities identified in the proposed reorganization to establish varying fee structures, with the exception of special assessments enacted by the various localities. There are no identified significant opportunities to improve on rates or fees for service.
- County Fire is in the process of considering whether to pursue creating a development impact fee for new development. At the time of this report, these fees have not been approved or implemented. Given the projected growth rates in the district, it is believed that these fees will fully account for the fire station improvements or enhancements in the planned time frames.
- Fees charged to students and attendees at the Richard Sewell Training Center are based on market structure and designed to recover the cost of the training, not to generate additional operating revenue.

4.f Opportunities for Shared Facilities

The primary facilities utilized in the delivery of fire protection services are fire stations, training facilities, and communication centers. Many jurisdictions across the State and nationally have pursued a regional approach to sharing these facilities. The following points represent the service review determinations relating to opportunities for shared facilities:

- The regional nature of the service delivery approach utilized by County Fire currently includes areas within cities' that are served by a board governed fire district or CSA, and local jurisdictions, which contract with County Fire. As a result, County Fire already operates out of several facilities owned by other jurisdictions that are either within the boundaries of County Fire or is within cities that contract for services with County Fire.
- County Fire contracts services to other local jurisdictions to ensure that unincorporated pockets surrounded by, or near incorporated cities are adequately covered by either service contracts or automatic aid so as to ensure that closest unit responds to these areas. In some cases this includes operating county fire stations such as Station 39 in Oak Glen that is operated by the City of Yucaipa.
- County Fire is currently a member of the CONFIRE Communications JPA that operates the County Communications Center in Rialto. The other partners in the JPA are the cities of Colton, Loma Linda, Rialto, and Redlands. The CONFIRE JPA also provides services to Chino, Running Springs, and Twenty-Nine Palms Fire Departments, and the cities of Adelanto, Hesperia, and Needles through the fire protection contracts with County Fire. The communications center also serves as the State Office of Emergency Services Operational Area Dispatch Center for both Fire/Rescue and Emergency Medical Services, and provides after hours services to several County of San Bernardino departments including Road and Flood Control. The JPA recently completed a jointly funded short-term construction project with the Sheriff Office to remodel the current facilities in Rialto.
- As the long range needs of the County for public safety communications and the emergency operations center progress, County Fire is a participant in the Public Safety Operations Center Group that is evaluating sites and design options for a state of the art co-located fire and sheriff communications and emergency operations centers that will be adequate to handle the increased calls for service resulting from the growth San Bernardino County is anticipated to experience over the next 10-25 years.

- County Fire has automatic aid agreements that provide efficient utilization of existing resources to deliver services to both the incorporated and unincorporated areas. Short-term agreements have also been used to house both United States Forest Service and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection fire apparatus during fire season.
- The greatest opportunity for all fire agencies in San Bernardino County is to utilize the Richard Sewell Training Center located at the San Bernardino International Airport (SBIA) for instruction from basic fire training (Fire Academy) to sophisticated Incident Command Management programs and intensive special rescue programs. Currently outside agencies contract to utilize these facilities, including the Orange County Fire Authority.
- County Fire is also a member, along with the City of San Bernardino, and the San Bernardino Community College District, in the San Bernardino Regional Emergency Training Center JPA that owns and operates (construction to be completed this summer) an FAA funded aircraft crash-fire rescue training facility at the SBIA. Western regional airport firefighters are anticipated to utilize this facility to complete mandated training requirements. In addition, local fire agencies will have the opportunity to train their personnel in modern aircraft firefighting techniques, including a driver-training course specifically design for aircraft firefighting apparatus.

4.g Government Structure Options including Advantages and Disadvantages of Consolidation or Reorganization of Service Providers.

The Service Review provides a tool to comprehensively study existing and future public service conditions; to evaluate options for organization that would accommodate growth; and ensure that critical services are effectively and efficiently provided. LAFCOs may examine efficiencies that could be gained through (1) functional reorganizations within existing agencies; (2) formation of new special districts; (3) special district dissolutions and consolidations; (4) mergers of special districts with cities; (5) establishment of subsidiary districts; (6) annexations or detachments from cities or special districts; (7) amending or updating spheres-of-influence; or (8) any additional reorganization options found in Govt. Code § 56000 et seq. LAFCO is not required to initiate changes of organization based on service review conclusions; however, LAFCO, local agencies, and the public may use service review determinations to pursue subsequent changes to service structures, local jurisdictions, or spheres of influence.

Thirty-two separate fire districts or CSA's currently provide structural fire protection, emergency medical, ambulance, and rescue services in board governed areas of San Bernardino County.

The are five Fire Protection Districts, five ambulance districts, and 22 county service areas provide fire protection, emergency medical services (paramedic and ambulance transportation) currently under the management of County Fire.

There is no mechanism to extend publicly funded fire protection and emergency medical services to un-served areas.

Residents in unprotected areas depend on the largeness of surrounding agencies to respond to emergencies beyond their boundary. SANBAG forecasts predict that unincorporated population—currently at 282,120—will grow to 436,515 by 2030. New development will inevitably occur in un-served areas and the resources of surrounding agencies will be further impacted thereby increasing the risk factor for the entire region. Fire protection and emergency medical services within the current service areas of County Fire should be integrated to permit strategic regional planning, eliminate redundancies, allow more effective use of resources, and stimulate region-wide enhancement of service.

The Board of Supervisors directed staff to consider functional or structural integration of fire protection and emergency medical services in the unincorporated areas of the County of San Bernardino. Various concepts for integrating the fire services were presented to the Board along with the

opportunities, obstacles, and possible secondary effects. Three options were presented to the Board of Supervisors for consideration.

Option One: Regional Fire Protection Districts

This proposal would continue the CSA 70 (Consolidated Fire) structure but would eliminate, or dissolve many of the existing county service areas or districts with firepowers and consolidate them within three existing and expanded fire protection districts. Certain multiple service county service areas would remain to provide water, television, or park functions, but would relinquish their firepowers to the larger fire protection district. Under Option A, the existing Central Valley, Lake Arrowhead, and Yucca Valley Fire Protection Districts would be expanded to create three distinct regional fire protection districts, with each of the existing service areas (fire districts/CSA's) within the regional areas being consolidated within one of these expanded districts. These existing, but expanded districts, would be renamed to reflect the regional service delivery system. As an example, the Yucca Valley Fire Protection District would be expanded along with its sphere of influence to include the following areas or districts that are currently under county fire responsibility:

- CSA 20 - Joshua Tree Fire
- CSA 29 - Lucerne Valley Fire
- CSA 30 - Red Mountain
- CSA 38 Consolidated Fire (No. & So. Desert Division areas only)
- CSA 38 D - Victorville, J - Big River, K - Spring Valley, N - El Mirage
- CSA 56 Wrightwood Fire
- CSA 56 F-1 Pinion Hills Fire
- CSA 70 FP-1 Windy Acres Fire
- CSA 70 HL Havasu Lake Fire
- CSA 70 M Wonder Valley Fire
- CSA 70 W Hinkley Fire
- CSA 82 SV-1 Searles Valley

The name of the expanded district would be changed to the San Bernardino County Desert Fire Protection District. Existing property tax revenues of the aforementioned districts would be consolidated within the larger district and thus distributed according to the service levels required by the regional community. This proposal would also include the recommendation to include any of the area historically identified as the "unfunded fire protection area" in the new regional Desert Fire Protection District boundaries. The new Desert Fire Protection District could then be divided into two improvement districts, the North Desert Improvement District and the South Desert Improvement District, for community identity purposes and to preserve the financial resources of those communities within each sub-regional area. This procedure would be replicated in each of the other two regional fire districts (dissolve or merge the existing districts and service areas), resulting in the formation of the San Bernardino County Valley

FPD, and the San Bernardino Mountain FPD. The Board, if it so desired, could appoint a fire advisory commission in each of the regional fire districts to advise it on specific matters of district interest. This proposal, although a lengthy and potentially complicated Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) process, would assimilate the current 32 separate budgets into more manageable regional districts, those being the expanded and renamed Yucca Valley FPD, Central Valley FPD, and Lake Arrowhead FPD. There would be no change to current legal structure of CSA 70 – Consolidated Fire (Administration).

Advantages

- There would be no change to the basic operational structure of the County Fire Department, except a number of smaller districts would be consolidated into a larger regional district and delivery system.
- This regional fire district concept would continue the current community based fire protection delivery services supported by a centralized management system
- The new regional FPD's would provide for a more streamline delivery of services that would be based on a geographically similar regional, and tax base.
- Budget, Fiscal, and Asset management would be greatly simplified.
- Maintains separate legal liability from the County through expansion of the FPD's while protecting smaller districts by expanding liability coverage to the larger district.
- Provides some protection for property tax erosion by spreading the city annexation loss in the larger FPD/CSA's (i.e. CSA 38).

Disadvantages

- This proposal would not protect CSA 70 from losing tax revenue through the annexation process. The continued erosion of the base tax revenues directly affects the funding of the centralized management functions provided by County Fire.
- Potential community opposition to loss of community identification that has been historically developed through local fire protection districts and CSA's, and the utilization of local tax revenues on a more regional basis.
- The financial benefits of this regionalization are likely to be short lived especially for the desert region since much of the area remains rural, or is in transition from rural to suburban.

Option Two: Countywide Fire Protection District

This proposal would completely reorganize both the legal framework and financial configuration of the existing County Fire Department. Under this proposal, the existing CSA 70 (Consolidated Fire) would lose its firepowers, and the tax revenue would be reallocated to the new successor fire district, the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District. Additionally, each of the existing board-governed fire districts and county service areas under the management of county fire would be dissolved or lose its firepowers with the exception of the Yucca Valley Fire Protection District (YVFPD). The YVFPD would concurrently expand along with its sphere of influence to annex all the other board governed fire district areas, all the unfunded fire protection areas, and accept the transfer of firepowers and authority from each of the county service areas. Additionally, the YVFPD name would be changed to the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District, and the newly formed district would be specifically authorized to provide all fire protection and related powers; including fire, rescue, paramedic, and ambulance. The executive director of LAFCO suggested the following possible actions in describing this reorganization process:

- Dissolution of County Service Area 38 and its improvement zones D, H, J, K, L, M, N, County Service Area 70 PM-1, Lake Arrowhead Fire Protection District, Central Valley Fire Protection District, and Monte Vista Fire Protection District.
- Transfer of Fire Authority and powers from County Service Area 29, 30, 53 B, 56, 56 F-1, 70, 70 FP-1, 70 HL, 70 M, 70 W, and CSA 82 SV-1.
- Transfer of Paramedic Authority and powers from CSA 70 PM-1. Formation of Improvement Districts of Yucca Valley Fire Protection District for CSA 38 Zones L, M, N, 70 FP-1, 70 M, and 70 PM-1.

In addition, and most importantly, four regional improvement districts (overlays) could be formed for identifying the tax revenue generated from within the improvement districts so there would be a direct correlation to service levels provided in the regional areas. These improvement districts would be identified as the Valley Improvement District, the Mountain Improvement District, the North Desert Improvement District, and the South Desert Improvement District, and constitute the same areas identified in Option A for these regions. As in Option A, the Board, if it so desired, could appoint an advisory commission in each of the four improvement districts. An alternative would be to appoint one commission for the entire district. This proposal is again a lengthy (4-6 months following submittal of a resolution of intent and plan of services) and potentially a complicated Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) process. It would assimilate the current 32 separate budgets into a single, manageable operation, known as the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District.

Advantages

- The creation of a single fire protection district would greatly simplify the current operational and fiscal structure of the County Fire Department by all fire districts and CSA's being folded into a single countywide delivery system.
- This countywide consolidation concept would still continue the current community based fire protection delivery services supported by a centralized management system
- The establishment of regional improvement districts would provide for a more streamline delivery of services that would be based on a geographically similar and regional tax base.
- This proposal would protect CSA 70 from losing tax revenue through the annexation process.
- An election for a special tax could be conduct for a single improvement district or on a countywide basis.
- The application of service models would be uniform throughout the improvement areas for future planning.
- The benefits of this regionalization are likely to be more long term since the funding can be allocated to a regional delivery versus on the local community's ability to pay basis
- Maintains separate legal liability from the County through expansion of the FPD's while protecting smaller districts by expanding liability coverage to the larger district.

Disadvantages

- Potential community opposition to loss of community identification that has been historically developed through local fire districts and CSA's, and utilization of local tax revenues on a more regional basis.

Option Three: General Fund Department

A third option would be to dissolve all the Board Governed Fire Protection Districts and CSA's with fire powers, transfer all the associated property tax revenues, fee revenues etc. into the general fund, and make County Fire a general fund department similar to the Sheriff's office. Under this proposal, there are a number of issues to evaluate, however, the most significant policy decision

would be related to the long standing decision to keep all the Special Districts (Fire, Flood, Special Districts, Airports) separate legal entities to reduce the financial exposure of the County from liability claims and lawsuits. This proposal would require a number of actions to occur that relate to transfer of employees from special districts employment to county employment with associated MOU meet and confer requirements, transfer of assets from the districts/CSA's to the county, potentially the changing of mutual aid/fire agreements and membership in various Joint Powers Authorities.

Advantages

- Protects CSA 70 and Districts/CSA's from loss of revenue from annexations.
- Simplifies the organizational structure, budget process, and the operational delivery system.
- Provides greatest opportunity for long term financial stability of the County FD, as the Department would no longer be restricted by property tax revenues but funded through the County General Fund as directed by the Board of Supervisors.
- Eliminates boundary issues associated with current special district delivery system and establishes a true countywide fire department in the eyes of the public.

Disadvantages

- Exposes County's General Fund to legal liability of County Fire operations and fiscal constraints.
- Requires substantial changes in personnel related issues (employment, MOU's, rules and regulations, policies etc.)
- May require changes to agreements, agency MOU's, JPA memberships etc.
- Requires transfer of assets and combining of multiple support functions including human relations, information services, service centers, communications etc.
- Future labor negotiations would be based on the General Fund's ability to pay versus the current fiscal limitations of the fire districts and CSA's.

- Potential community opposition to loss of community identification that has been historically developed through local fire districts and CSA's, and utilization of local tax revenues on a more regional basis.

On February 1, 2005, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to prepare the necessary documentation to implement Option Two-The Countywide Fire Protection District. The application is in support of the Board of Supervisors direction.

4.h Evaluation of Management Efficiencies

Management efficiency refers to the effectiveness of an agency's internal organization to provide efficient, quality public services. Efficiently managed agencies consistently implement plans to improve service delivery, reduce waste, eliminate duplications of effort, contain costs, maintain qualified employees, build and maintain adequate contingency reserves, and encourage and maintain open dialogues with the public and other public and private agencies. The service review evaluated management efficiency by analyzing agency functions, operations, and practices – as well as the agency ability to meet current and future service demands. Services are evaluated in relation to available resources and consideration of service provision constraints.

County Fires' commitment to management efficiency is a cornerstone of the organization. County Fire has consolidated Emergency Communications, Vehicle Services, Human Resources (shared with Special Districts Department), Fiscal and Budget Management, and Warehousing and Logistical Support. The current executive management structure of County Fire consists of a Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief (unfilled), two Assistant Chiefs (Operations and Administration), five Division Chiefs (four field divisions, training division), and five Division Managers (Community Safety/Fire Marshal, Budget and Fiscal, Support Services, Office of Emergency Services, Information Services, and Human Resources). The Operations Section comprises the largest element of County Fire. The Assistant Chief for operations oversees the day-to-day activities of the four field divisions (Valley, North Desert, South Desert, and Mountain) who manage eight battalions and 67 fire stations. The protectorate area is just over 16,000 square miles and encompasses the most diverse topography of the western United States with a population of over 600,000, not including vacationers, travelers, or workers who commute into the area.

County Fires' training center, located at the San Bernardino International Airport (formerly Norton AFB) is an accredited regional training facility for all aspects of fire and rescue training. Currently under construction is a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funded, western region Aircraft Firefighting and Rescue facility, which will be managed and operated by the San Bernardino County Regional Training Center JPA, of which County Fire is a member.

County Fires' Vehicle Services, a function of Support Services, operates from a full service facility adjacent to the training facility. The vehicle shop can manufacture or repair all makes and models of fire equipment from engine companies to fire boats and rescue Snow-Cat. The shop employs 16 mechanics with varying levels of certification from the California Fire Service Training program to Automotive Service Excellence (A.S.E.) certification programs. The Cities of Colton, Loma Linda, and Rialto Fire Departments contract with County Fire for vehicle services repairs and maintenance. Additionally, the Support

Services Section provides the supply and warehousing function for the ordering, distribution, and maintenance of field fire equipment for the operational divisions, battalions, and fire stations, and incident support during major emergencies.

The Human Resources Division, which is shared with the Special Districts Department, handles all matters related to personnel. The HR Division handles the recruitment and testing of entry level and promotional positions as well as resolving personnel issues, MOU interpretation and negotiations, and manages the department payroll processes. The Human Resources staff includes: one Division Manager, three members assigned to the Human Resources function, and six Payroll staff members.

The Fiscal Services Division (Budget and Finance Office) oversees all functions related to the financial operation of both the Fire Department and the Special District Department. This includes the preparation and administration of the budgets for twenty-seven separate districts, five ambulance enterprise accounts, purchasing and cost accounting, accounts payable and receivable, ambulance billing, and auditing assistance for the field divisions, either special districts or fire. The staffing for the Fiscal Services includes one Division Manager, two Budget Officers, one Fiscal Services Supervisor and seventeen associated positions.

The Community Safety Division is made up of two sections-Fire Prevention Services and Hazardous Materials Services. Within Fire Prevention Services there are three sub-sections whose purpose it is to reduce the frequency, probability and severity of fires along with the resultant deaths, injuries and property damage through occupancy inspections, education, and training the community to be fire safe within the Department's jurisdiction. The first unit is Fire Protection Planning and Engineering, which coordinates all new construction or major renovations under the Uniform Fire Code, the Uniform Building Code, and other related codes. The second unit is Fire Prevention, which conducts fire and life safety inspections of all occupancies as mandated by the aforementioned codes, and answers complaint calls concerning fire hazards. Additionally, this unit provides life-safety awareness programs through the public education officer. The third unit is Fire Investigations, tasked with investigating all fires that result in property damage, injury, or death.

The Hazardous Materials Division is to protect the health and safety of the public and the environment of the County of San Bernardino by assuring that hazardous materials are properly handled and stored. The Division accomplishes this through inspection, emergency response, site remediation, and hazardous waste management services. Specific responsibilities include:

- The operation of collection facilities and events for residents of San Bernardino County to safely dispose of household hazardous waste.

- Providing affordable waste management alternatives to businesses that generate very small quantities of waste through the Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator (CESQG) program.
- Inspecting hazardous material handlers and hazardous waste generators to ensure full compliance with laws and regulations. Implementing CUPA programs for the development of accident prevention and emergency plans, the proper installation, monitoring, and closure of underground tanks, and the handling, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous wastes.
- Providing 24-hour response to emergency incidents involving hazardous materials or wastes in order to protect the public and the environment from accidental releases and illegal activities.
- Overseeing the investigation and remediation of environmental contamination due to releases from underground storage tanks, hazardous waste containers, chemical processes, or the transportation of hazardous materials.
- Conducting investigations and taking enforcement action as necessary against anyone who disposes of hazardous waste illegally or otherwise manages hazardous materials or wastes in violation of federal, state, or local laws and regulations.
- Providing Hazardous Materials Division information to the public and to other agencies upon request.

The San Bernardino County Fire Department – CONFIRE JPA Communications Center is located in the City of Rialto at the southwest end of the Rialto Municipal Airport, adjacent to the County Emergency Operations Center. The Confire Communications Center, better known as CommCenter, is a multi agency emergency Fire/EMS dispatch center. Its primary mission is to provide 24/7 direct fire/EMS dispatch for the Consolidated Fire Agencies as well as the contracting fire agencies. Member agencies of the CONFIRE JPA are: San Bernardino County Fire Department, Colton Fire Department, Loma Linda Fire Department, Redlands Fire Department, and the Rialto Fire Department. The following agencies currently contract for dispatch services with the CONFIRE JPA: Chino Valley Fire Protection District, Running Springs Fire District, Twenty-nine Palms Fire Department, and the Cities of Hesperia, Adelanto, and Needles. CommCenter also functions as the operational area dispatch for the County of San Bernardino. Under this function, CommCenter is responsible for coordinating mutual aid needs within the county and for processing mutual aid requests to and from Region VI Office of Emergency Services Operations Center in Riverside. In addition, CommCenter provides after hour dispatch services for

local government, i.e. the County Transportation/Flood Department, County Museums, Public Health, Environmental Health and County Facilities Management, and City of Loma Linda Public Works/Animal Control. A new 3500 square foot facility was recently completed adjacent to the existing facility.

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) is a coordinated management effort, involving local, state, and federal government agencies as well as volunteer organizations and businesses. Within an integrated emergency management framework, these entities assist citizens and their communities to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and eliminate or reduce the effects of natural, civil, and technological emergencies and disasters. The emergency management structure that exists in the United States has its origins in the civil defense efforts that arose after World War II in response to the possibility of nuclear attack. In the 1960's, the field of emergency management began expanding, and by the 1980's, the focus had widened to the multi-hazard approach that prevails today. The primary mission of emergency management is to prevent injuries, save lives, and reduce property damage in your community. The County Fire Chief serves as the Assistant Director of Emergency Services for the county directly reporting to the County Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors who serves as the director.

The mission of the San Bernardino County Fire Department/Office of Emergency Services (OES) is to help prepare the communities and citizens of San Bernardino County Operational Area for the impacts of emergencies and disasters both natural and man-made. Emphasis at OES is placed on education of the public, coordination and communication of essential information, proactive customer service, and effective planning measures for response, recovery and mitigation from disasters. The mission of OES is to provide leadership and guidance in building the emergency management capability of county, city and town governments, special districts, communities, business and industry. This, in turn, will help to save lives and protect property by developing programs and emergency management operational capabilities that prepare for, respond to, and recover from and emergency or disaster, regardless of cause. OES defines the need for, and use of, all available resources of equipment and manpower for survival and recovery of the county's population by providing a responsive and progressive emergency management service. Primary to OES' function, they report the extent of personal injury, loss of life, property damage and remaining operational capabilities of local emergency relief forces to State and Federal agencies to support requests for public and private disaster assistance. Additionally, OES establishes procedures for requesting and utilizing aid from other local governments and from State and Federal Government when necessary and for granting aid under the provisions of mutual aid agreements. It is OES' primary goal to minimize or avoid future disastrous conditions by implementing required programs and safety measures that will help mitigate the recurrences of these hazards through the review and revision of enforcement codes, ordinances, plans and development policies which effect the citizens of San Bernardino County.

4.i Local Accountability and Governance

In making the determination of local accountability and governance, LAFCO will consider the degree to which the agency fosters local accountability. Local accountability refers to public agency decision making and operational and management processes that: (1) include an accessible and accountable elected or appointed decision-making body and agency staff; (2) encourage and value public participation; (3) disclose budgets, programs, and plans; (4) solicit public input when considering rate changes and work and infrastructure plans; (5) evaluate outcomes of plans, programs, and operations and disclose results to the public.

The Yucca Valley Fire Protection District (dba – San Bernardino County Fire Protection District) will provide the management and oversight of all fire protection and emergency medical services within the service area. County Fire (formerly CSA 70 – Consolidated Fire) provides overall management for the county fire and emergency medical services system, including the necessary components such as the joint powers agreement (JPA) for emergency communications. It manages a budget, which includes 219 fire suppression positions providing services to the protectorate as well as the “unfunded” fire protection area and three contract cities.

CSA 70 was formed in 1971 and currently provides management oversight to approximately 16,000 square miles and over 600,000 people. CSA 70 Fire, San Bernardino County Consolidated Fire District, is the culmination of several consolidations of the Board of Supervisors governed fire agencies. The initial amalgamation in the early 1970's was the consolidation of the Fontana, Bloomington and Muscoy FPD. In 1982, the management of the Central Valley FPD and Chino FPD was initiated, which eliminated one Fire Chief. Subsequent consolidations, beginning in 1985, included Lake Arrowhead FPD, Yucca Valley FPD, Wrightwood FPD, and Lucerne Valley FPD and identified the organization as the “*San Bernardino County Fire Agency*”. This initial consolidation included some of the support services normally associated with a county agency, (i.e. vehicle services, fire prevention, etc.) Oversight for many of the volunteer districts was included as well. In 1994, the Board of Supervisors initiated a full consolidation with the exception of the CSA 38 areas, which were under contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDFFP) for day-to-day management.

In 1997 the Board of Supervisors approved an amended contract with CDFFP, which transferred the responsibility of the unfunded areas and the CSA 38 Colorado River area to the county fire department. Periodic transfers of area and responsibility continued until December of 1998 when the entirety of all board-governed fire districts, and all of CSA 38, until the consolidation was complete.

The services provided include:

<i>Overall Fire Management</i>	<i>Hazardous Materials</i>
<i>Administrative</i>	<i>Household Hazardous Waste</i>
<i>Ambulance Billing</i>	<i>Information Systems</i>
<i>Fleet Maintenance</i>	<i>Human Resources</i>
<i>Support Services</i>	<i>Finance and Business Office</i>
<i>Communications</i>	<i>Office of Emergency Services</i>
<i>Emergency Services Training</i>	<i>Fire Prevention and Community Safety</i>
<i>Fire / Arson Investigation</i>	<i>Major Incident Management</i>

County Fire is currently the Operational Area Fire Coordinator (O AFC) for the San Bernardino County Fire Chiefs Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid Plan. San Bernardino is the largest county in the continental United States covering more area than the states of New Jersey and New Hampshire combined. San Bernardino has the most varied and diverse topography and land use elements and is on the lower one-fifth of the San Andreas Fault, with many minor faults through out the region. The District Fire Agencies, the Municipal Fire Departments, and San Bernardino County are all signatory to the State of California Master Mutual Aid Plan. In addition to the mutual aid plan, most of the agencies in San Bernardino have developed local mutual, or automatic, aid plans. Additionally, the County Fire Chief is the Operational Area Coordinator under the State-wide Emergency Management System for California focusing disaster management and reconciliation through the Regional Coordinator (Los Alamitos) for the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

As a special district, County Fire is governed by, and responsible to, the county Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors, in turn, each has field representatives who maintain localized contact with representatives of County Fire to resolve issues as they arise. Additionally, County Fire representatives routinely work with Town and City Councils, Community Service District Boards, Municipal Advisory Councils, and other pertinent groups of interest. The Board of Supervisors could, at its discretion, create either a single countywide fire advisory board or four regional fire advisory boards to assist it in the oversight process.